

Remember The Ladies

i.

Sylvia Church
Duxbury 1753

thin face
sharp blue eyes
sharp as needles
her hair dissolves
in the background

she looks like
she could have out
lived more than
a few men

like she wouldn't
take much
she didn't want to

and that the perfume bottle
she holds is not
for smelling salts

ii.

a slave woman
hiding her baby in
the corn leaves

a woman grinding her
teeth to dust hating
the man who smelled of
brandy and sweat
and pig

everybody married
women gave up money
all rights divorce
impossible bloody

sheets bad water
few women lived long
enough to die
of old age

vii.

Aristotle's Complete
Masterpiece in 3 parts
displaying the secrets of

nature in the generations of
man

sex manual Philadelphia
1796 the

woman undressed
a chastity belt
around her she could
be Manet's woman

her hands at her
side an old man
fully clothed looking
as if she were
a bit disgusting

who read this book
in how many houses a
young girl opening it
in back of the woodpile

or slipping it into the
ropes inside her bed
startled by what
the moon's tongue touches

still touching herself

xxviii.

one woman
died at 117

Mary Mirick Davies

outlived 3 husbands

9 children 45
grandchildren 215
great grand

and 800 great great
great grandchildren

hugged by her blue eyes

xxxii.

cotton printed with suns
branches on linen

a woman wrapped in
this bed rug

as sleet glazed
the trees glass

dreams of bread and roses
the night coats her

mind like ice
she leaves no name on

any quilt
in any diary

Letter

Everything is
all dripping and
fog. Even the white
stars on the dog
wood are little
platters full of
rain. Tuesday seems
12 weeks away
the cherries will
be ripe by then
the columbine be
the color of skin
with a little rose

38 Main Street

sitting on the toilet
with you in the tub
Mommy Frieda May
the blue room like water
smell of wet clothes
and talcum you never
liked yr name Ben
couldn't come in
sitting on the toilet
yr breasts floating
on the water you
younger than I
am now